

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT**

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March 7, 2003

To: CSBG Service Providers

**Subject: California's Implementation of Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)**

As you know, prior to the federal mandates to implement Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) at the state level, the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) service providers were already involved in developing outcome measure-type methodologies. With the emergence of the ROMA implementation requirements, CSD found itself ahead of the curve and essentially "hit the ground running" when it began its formal ROMA development and implementation efforts in 1993. Since then, CSD has engaged in a number of labor-intensive activities that has led to California's compliance with the federal ROMA mandates.

In response to questions some of you have asked from time to time about California's implementation of ROMA, I am enclosing a series of most frequently asked ROMA-related questions and answers, and a chronological summary of activities that highlight CSD's effort to encourage CSBG service providers to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and implement a course for improving agency capacity and performance. Also enclosed is a roster of CSBG service providers who participated in these activities. Thanks to our collaborative effort, California has been ROMA compliant since 1997, when all CSBG agencies transitioned to the new outcomes reporting model.

If you have any questions about California's implementation of ROMA, please contact me at (916) 341-4327 or Email: [jochoa@csd.ca.gov](mailto:jochoa@csd.ca.gov).

Thank you for your support of ROMA.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by John Ochoa.

JOHN OCHOA  
Program Manager  
Program Development and Support

Enclosure



# **California Department of Community Services and Development: Most Frequently Asked ROMA Questions & Answers**

March 2003

## **What is ROMA?**

Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) is a management practice that incorporates the use of outcomes or results into the administration, management, and operation of human services. It is an avenue for organizations to continually evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and improve agency capacity and performance. Community Action Agencies focus on the outcome - the result of the product - in addition to program and service.

## **Is ROMA mandated?**

Yes. ROMA is the term members of the Community Action Network use to describe their response to the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. This Act requires federally funded programs to demonstrate measurable outcomes. Further, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Reauthorization Act Amendments of 1994 direct community action programs to develop a process for measuring the outcomes and impact of their activities. Additionally, the CSBG Reauthorization Act Amendments of 1998 require States and all eligible entities to participate in ROMA or an alternative system for measuring performance and results not later than fiscal year 2001.

## **Are there specific federal ROMA goals?**

Yes. Six goals, listed below, were developed by the Office of Community Services (OCS) CSBG Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF). Since 2000, California has reported on all six national ROMA goals and a list of direct measures in response to GPRA.

1. Low-income people become more self-sufficient.
2. The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.
3. Low-income people own a stake in their community.
4. Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.
5. Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.
6. Low-income people, especially, vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

**What has CSD and the California CSBG network done to implement ROMA?**

Prior to the federal mandates to implement ROMA at the state level, CSD and CSBG service providers were already involved in developing outcome measure-type methodologies. With the emergence of the ROMA implementation requirements, CSD found itself ahead of the curve and essentially “hit the ground running” when it began its formal ROMA development and implementation efforts in 1993. Since then, CSD has engaged in a number of labor-intensive activities that has led to its compliance with the federal ROMA mandates.

For a detailed chronology of the pre 1993 and post 1993 activities, please see the attached detailed chronological summary of activities CSD engaged in to implement ROMA .

**Is there a formal national ROMA compliance certification process?**

No. As noted earlier, ROMA is the common language for CAA's to use to respond to GPRA and the CSBG Reauthorization Act Amendments of 1994 and 1998. ROMA emphasizes that each state engage in its own strategic planning process to address how it will contribute to the accomplishment of the national goals (see above) as well as to the specific objectives unique to the state. Evidence of a state's compliance with ROMA is demonstrated by the extent that the CSBG network reports measurable outcomes via the CSBG Information System Survey (CSBG/IS), and implements a plan for marrying traditional management functions with the new focus on accountability.

**Is California ROMA compliant?**

Yes. California has been in compliance with ROMA since 1997, when all CSBG agencies transitioned to the new outcomes reporting model.

In 2001, the National Association for State and Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) reported that its review of CSD's 1999 CSBG Information System Survey showed that a great deal of effort had been done to track all the hard numbers for many measures, and recognized CSD for the number of unique and important outcome measures that have been created to show the impact of community action in California.

**Who can provide ROMA training?**

OCS has issued no specific requirements as to who is qualified and/or eligible to conduct ROMA training. Although California and a significant number of states have implemented ROMA, many have been slow to adopt its results-oriented and accountability concepts. In 2001, in order to move ROMA implementation along, OCS initiated a ROMA compliance and technical assistance program to help assure that the Community Services Network remains strong, focused, effective, and accountable.

The ROMA compliance and technical assistance support activities included OCS funding the replication of a “train-the-trainers” program developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development – Office of Community Services. The curriculum was developed by The Center for Applied Management Practices, Inc. (Harrisburg, PA).

This curriculum is designed to help community action staff gain a sufficient ROMA knowledge base and teaching expertise to spread the task of ROMA training with and among eligible entities, and provides participants the opportunity to use its copyrighted ROMA training materials.

States are free to use the Pennsylvania copyrighted ROMA material, but only by staff that have successfully completed Pennsylvania’s ROMA Training Program. States are also free to continue utilizing their own training programs and materials in support of ROMA. CSD’s Pamela Harrison and Norm DeYoung have received the requisite training to use Pennsylvania’s copyrighted material.

**Are there any specific sanctions that can be imposed on a state if it fails to achieve ROMA compliance?**

The federal regulations and statutes in connection with ROMA do not specifically address the issue of sanctions with respect to ROMA non-compliance. However, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services has the general authority to impose conditions and sanctions on states and local CBOs for non-compliance with federal law and regulations. CSD has no knowledge of any sanctions imposed on a state or local CAA for failure to become ROMA compliant

**What happens if CSBG service providers fail to implement ROMA?**

States have the authority to withhold approval of Community Action Plans (CAP) that do not comply with federal and/or state CSBG law, including ROMA implementation, until compliance is achieved. Pending CAP approval, states would develop a quality improvement plan that may include training and technical assistance.

**California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD)  
Chronological Summary: California's Promotion of CSBG Outcomes &  
Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)**

March 2003

- May 1992: CSD and CSBG service providers established the CSBG/Information System Committee (CSBG/IS) to develop strategies to measure and report outcomes of CSBG activities.
- Mid 1992: CSD contracted with Cal/Neva Community Action Association to assist with the assessment of outcomes needs of CSBG agencies. Cal/Neva received another contract to link their members to HandsNet and the available national community action agency information. CSD also contracted with La Cooperativa Campesina de California for an assessment of outcomes needs of Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) agencies.
- 1993: The original CSBG/IS Committee was re-established to discuss policy related issues on a regular basis. The first topic discussed was the development of a management information process to collect data and provide the ability to conduct program evaluations.
- 1993: Passage of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA).
- 1993: Human Services Amendments of 1994, authorized the CSBG for fiscal years 1995 through 1998, and included a provision that required the use of outcome measures to monitor success.
- 1994: The U. S. Office of Community Services (OCS) established the National Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF), and invited CAA participation in a process of results-oriented management. Mike Micciche, former CSD Director, wrote a letter to the California CSBG service provider network encouraging their participation in the process initiated by OCS. MATF agreed on six CSBG outcome goals and Mike Micciche again wrote a letter to CSBG service providers focusing on the impact of GPRA on the CSBG Program and the importance of the network's ability to describe its work in terms of the achievement of established outcome goals. Lois Carson (Riverside County CAA) and Gloria Stevenson Clark (City of Los Angeles CAA) represented California on the MATF.

- 1995: Former CSD Director Micciche reported to OCS that California had developed the California Matrix Model that included a system of CSBG strategic planning, evaluation and matrices specifically designed to measure program outcomes. In March 1995, CSD launched a two-year long series of two-day strategic planning/outcome training workshops.
- July 1995: Five CAA's began pre-piloting program operations using the Draft California Matrix Model. These activities launched the California Matrix Model for Establishing and Replicating Community Services Block Grant Program Family, Community and Agency Outcomes Indicators.
- 1995-96: CSD/CSBG/IS Committee continued work on the outcome measures model. The 1996, CSD reported to the state legislature that CSD and the CSBG service provider network had developed a strategic planning, evaluation, outcome reporting system and matrices to measure outcomes.
- 1996: CSD provided CSBG service provider network with two options to transition toward meeting federal outcomes mandates: (1) Pilot a new and evolving outcome data collection system, or (2) Continue with the then existing collection system for one more year.
- 1997: All CSBG service providers developed their Community Action Plans (CAP) on the new outcome system.
- 1998: The CSBG Reauthorization Act Amendments of 1998 require States and all eligible entities to participate in ROMA or an alternative system for measuring performance and results not later than fiscal year 2001.
- CSD and CSBG network established the Outcome Assessment Task Force. CSD produced a ROMA Guide: "Organizational Readiness for Results: An Assessment Tool – How to Measure Where Your Organization is in the Transition from a Service-Based Agency to a Results-Oriented Agency."
- 1999: CSD published the history of CSD's collaboration with CSBG service provider network to transition from outputs to outcome reporting: "California Matrix For Establishing and Replicating Community Service Block Grant Program Family, Community and Agency Outcome Indicators."

2000: CSD and CSBG service providers established the CSBG Automation Team (CAT) to address issues related to data collection and reporting. All CSBG service providers now report outcomes to CSD.

2001: CSD and County of Riverside, Department of Community Action staff attended ROMA National Virtual Outcomes College – Training of Trainers Program in Pennsylvania. CSD also surveyed CSBG service providers to assess implementation of ROMA at the local agency level and forwarded results to OCS. CSD and network representatives attended OCS Regional ROMA meeting in San Francisco (August). CSD continued to provide ROMA training to network.

2002: CSD supported Cal/Neva's effort to secure Board Training Program funding from OCS. Although not a ROMA training program per se, Cal/Neva was awarded an OCS grant, and CSD augmented the grant with \$10,000 to train CAA board members on basic board roles and responsibilities, needs assessment, program planning, operations and evaluation, ROMA principles and their use in all aspects of agency functioning, and the monitoring and evaluation of agency leadership. CSD is also participating in Cal/Neva's Board Training Work Group to review training material content.

The CAT has made significant progress in streamlining the CSBG reporting process: (1) New reporting forms combine current forms into one, and eliminate duplicative reporting, (2) Reports can be completed and submitted electronically, (3) Consistency of data collected and reported throughout the program year; and (4) Drafted a blueprint of "next steps" that must be taken to fully automate California's tracking and reporting of CSBG data.

CSD is in the process of assessing future information technology needs, including CSBG data automation needs identified by the CAT. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the CAT, California is in a stronger position to respond to the CSBG/ROMA reporting needs of our service providers.

2003: CSD is scheduling ROMA supportive training through December 2003.

## **Roster of California CSBG Agencies participating in Outcome Measures/ROMA Development and Implementation**

1. Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency
2. Berkeley Community Action Agency
3. Calaveras/Mariposa Community Action Agency
4. California Human Development Corporation
5. California/Nevada Community Action Association
6. Campesinos Unidos, Inc.
7. Center for Employment Training
8. City of Los Angeles Community Development Department
9. Community Action Agency of Butte County, Inc
10. Community Action Agency of San Mateo County
11. Community Action Agency of Tehama County
12. Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County
13. Community Action Marin
14. County of Riverside Department of Community Action
15. County of San Diego Department of Social Services Community Action Program
16. Economic and Social Opportunities, Inc.
17. Economic Opportunity Commission of San Francisco
18. Economic Opportunity Commission of San Luis Obispo County, Inc.
19. El Dorado County Department of Community Services
20. Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission
21. Karuk Tribe of California
22. Kern County Economic Opportunity Corporation
23. Kings County Community Action Organization
24. La Cooperativa Campesina de California
25. Long Beach Community Services Development Corporation
26. Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission
27. Los Angeles County, Department of Community & Senior Citizens Services
28. Merced County Community Action Agency
29. Monterey County Department of Social Services
30. Napa County Council for Economic Opportunity
31. North Coast Energy Services
32. Northern California Indian Development Council
33. Placer County Community Services Department
34. Proteus, Inc.
35. Rural Community Assistance Corporation
36. Sacramento Employment & Training Agency
37. San Bernardino County Community Services Department
38. San Joaquin County Department of Aging and Community Services
39. Solano County Community Action Agency
40. Solano County Economic Opportunity Council
41. Sonoma County People for Economic Opportunity
42. Ventura County Commission on Human Concerns
43. Yuba County Community Services Commission
44. Yuba Sutter Legal

\* CSD apologizes if any CSBG service providers have been overlooked.



## OCS' Monitoring and Assessment Task Force

### National Goals and Outcome Measures

Effective October 1, 1999

For each goal that corresponds to the work your agency does, select at least one measure to report on, based on a current needs assessment survey. If you feel that none of the measures under a particular goal is a good measure of the work actually done by your agency, create a measure that more accurately reflects the work you do. In addition, note that some of the measures could easily apply to other goals as well as the one under which they are listed; use them wherever they seem most appropriate to you.

In measures below, number, wherever it appears, is to be expressed in two parts: the actual count, and the baseline total. For example, when the measure is number of households maintaining employment, express it as a factor of the total number of households served by the agency (e.g., 27 out of 86). Do not indicate percentages (e.g., 31.4% or even 31 out of 100, unless your baseline total is actually 100 households); the data need to be aggregated with that of other agencies before percentages are calculated.

**GOAL 1.** (Self-sufficiency) LOW-INCOME PEOPLE BECOME MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT

**GOAL 2.** (Community Revitalization) THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH LOW-INCOME PEOPLE LIVE ARE IMPROVED

**GOAL 3.** (Community Revitalization) LOW-INCOME PEOPLE OWN A STAKE IN THEIR COMMUNITY

**GOAL 4.** PARTNERSHIPS AMONG SUPPORTERS AND PROVIDERS OF SERVICES TO LOW-INCOME PEOPLE ARE ACHIEVED

**GOAL 5.** AGENCIES INCREASE THEIR CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

**GOAL 6.** (Family stability) LOW-INCOME PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS, ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL BY STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND OTHER SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS

## **GOAL 1: (SELF-SUFFICIENCY)**

### **LOW-INCOME PEOPLE BECOME MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT**

#### **Direct measures:**

- a. Number of participants seeking employment who obtain it [as compared with the total number of participants].
- b. Number of participants maintaining employment for a full twelve months.
- c. Number of households in which adult members obtain and maintain employment for at least ninety days.
- d. Number of households with an annual increase in the number of hours of employment.
- e. Number of households gaining health care coverage through employment.
- f. Number of households experiencing an increase in an annual income as a result of earnings.
- g. Number of households experiencing an increase in annual income as a result of receiving allowable tax credits, such as the earned income and child care tax credits.
- h. Number of custodial households who experience an increase in annual income as a result of regular child support payments.
- i. Number of participating families moving from substandard housing into stable standard housing, as compared with the total number of participating families.
- j. Number of households which obtain and/or maintain home ownership.
- k. Number of minority households which obtain and/or maintain home ownership.
- l. Number of people progressing toward literacy and/or GED.
- m. Number of people making progress toward post-secondary degree or vocational training.
- n. Other outcome measure(s) specific to the work of your agency.

#### **Survey question measures:**

- o. Number of clients who consider themselves more self-sufficient since participating in services or activities of the agency.
- p. Number of clients reporting an increase in income since participating in the services of the agency.

#### **Scale measures:**

- q. Number of households which demonstrated movement up one or more steps on a scale or matrix measuring self-sufficiency
- r. Number of households achieving positive movement in self-sufficiency as demonstrated by an increase of at least one point in an overall score of a Family Development Scale.
- s. Number of households achieving stability in the \_\_\_\_\_ dimension of a Family Development Matrix.

## **GOAL 2: (COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION)**

### **THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH LOW-INCOME PEOPLE LIVE ARE IMPROVED**

#### **Direct Measures:**

- a. Number of accessible, living wage jobs created and/or retained.
- b. Increase in assessed value of homes as a result of rehabilitation projects.
- c. Increase in proportion of state and federal funds allocated for meeting emergency and long-term needs of the low-income population.
- d. Increase in access to community services and resources by low-income people.
- e. Increase in available housing stock through new construction.
- f. Increase in the availability and affordability of essential services, e.g. transportation, medical care, child care.
- g. Other outcome measure(s) specific to the work done by your agency.

#### **Survey question measures:**

- h. Number of households who believe the agency has helped improve the conditions in which they live.

#### **Scale measures:**

- i. Number of communities which demonstrated movement up one or more steps on a scale or matrix measuring community self-sufficiency, community health, or community vitality.
- j. Number of communities achieving stability in the \_\_\_\_\_ dimension of the Community Scaling Tool.

### **GOAL 3: (COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION)**

#### **LOW-INCOME PEOPLE OWN A STAKE IN THEIR COMMUNITY**

##### **Direct measures:**

- a. Number of households owning or actively participating in the management of their housing.
- b. Amount of "community investment" brought into the community by the Network and targeted to low-income people.
- c. Increase in minority businesses owned.
- d. Increase in access to capital by minorities.
- e. Increased level of participation of low-income people in advocacy and intervention activities regarding funding levels, distribution policies, oversight, and distribution procedures for programs and funding streams targeted for the low-income community.
- f. Other outcome measure(s) specific to the work done by your agency.

##### **Survey question measures:**

- g. Number of households participating or volunteering in one or more groups.
- h. Number of households who say they feel they are part of the community.

##### **Scale measures**

- i. Number of communities which demonstrated movement up one or more steps on a scale or matrix measuring community self-sufficiency, community health, or community vitality.
- j. Number of communities achieving stability in the \_\_\_\_\_ dimension of the Community Scaling Tool.

**GOAL 4:**

**PARTNERSHIPS AMONG SUPPORTERS AND PROVIDERS OF SERVICES TO LOW-INCOME PEOPLE ARE ACHIEVED**

**Direct measures:**

- a. Number of partnerships established and/or maintained with other public and private entities to mobilize and leverage resources to provide services to low-income people.
- b. Number of partnerships established and/or maintained with other public and private entities to complete the continuum of care for low-income people.
- c. Number of partnerships established and/or maintained with other public and private entities which ensure ethnic, cultural, and other special needs considerations are appropriately included in the delivery service system.
- d. Other outcome measure(s) specific to the partnerships created by local agencies.

**Survey question measures:**

- e. Number of principal partners who are satisfied with the partnership.
- f. Partner's rating of the responsiveness of the agency.

**Scale Measures:**

- g. Number of agencies which demonstrated movement up one or more steps on a scale or matrix measuring agency partnership capacity.
- h. Number of agencies achieving stability in the \_\_\_\_\_ dimension of an agency partnership capacity scaling tool.
- i. Number of agencies that achieve and maintain commitments from other service and resource partners to carry out agency mission.
- j. Number of agencies that establish and maintain commitments to provide resources to partner organizations that serve agency customers.
- k. Number of agencies that establish and maintain coordination of agency and non-agency resources to create a programmatic continuum of services with outcome-based objectives establishes and maintains a selection process which ensures that low-income community members are elected in a public process.

**GOAL 5:****AGENCIES INCREASE THEIR CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE RESULTS****Direct measures:**

- a. Total dollars mobilized by the agency.
- b. Total dollars mobilized by the agency as compared with CSBG dollars.
- c. Number of boards making changes as a result of a periodic organizational assessment.
- d. Number of programs which have become more effective as a result of research and data (their own as well as others).
- e. Number of programs which have become more effective as a result of needs assessment surveys.
- f. Number of families having their situation improved as a result of comprehensive developmental services.
- g. Increase in community revitalization as a result of programs.
- h. Number of agencies increasing their number of funding sources and increasing the total value of resources available for services to low-income people.
- i. Number of agencies leveraging non-CSBG resources with CSBG resources at a ratio greater than 1:1.
- j. Number of agencies where board composition accurately represents the ethnic diversity of the service territory.
- k. Number of agencies where customers served accurately represents the ethnic diversity of the service territory.
- l. Number of agencies where staffing component accurately represents the ethnic diversity of the service territory.
- m. Number of development contacts as a result of outreach programs.
- n. Number of special populations showing improvement as a result of programs aimed at the population.
- o. Number of clients showing improvement as a result of emergency services received.
- p. Other outcome measure(s) specific to the work done by local agencies.

**Scale measures:**

- q. Number of agencies that achieve and maintain compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, and requirements.
- r. Number of agencies that achieve and maintain a governance process that is inclusive, representative of, and accountable to the community.
- s. Number of agencies that achieve and maintain a workforce environment which empowers and develops its employees, has open communications, pays its employees a living wage, and is mission-driven.
- t. Number of agencies which achieve and maintain a planning, measurement, and an evaluation system which creates a programmatic, continuum of services with outcomes-based objectives, and where the measurements of programs are used to improve services.

- u. Number of agencies that achieve and maintain communication and feedback processes that engage all stakeholders.
- v. Number of agencies that establish and maintain a process where evaluations are used to improve services.

**GOAL 6: (Family stability)**

**LOW-INCOME PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS, ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL BY STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND OTHER SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS**

**Direct measures:**

- a. Number of aged households maintaining an independent living situation.
- b. Number of disabled or medically challenged persons maintaining an independent living situation.
- c. Number of households in crisis whose emergency needs are ameliorated.
- d. Number of participating families moving from homeless or transitional housing into stable standard housing.
- e. Number of households in which there has been an increase in donation of time to volunteer activities (not mandated by welfare-to-work programs).
- f. Number of households in which there has been an increase in children's involvement in extracurricular activities.
- g. Number of high consumption households realizing a reduction in energy burden.
- h. Number of households moving from cultural isolation to involvement with their cultural community.
- i. Other outcome measure(s) specific to the work done by your agency.

**Survey question measure:**

- j. Number of households indicating improved family functioning since participating in the services or activities of the agency.

**Scale measures:**

- k. Number of households moving from crisis to stability on one dimension of a scale.
- l. Number of households moving from vulnerability to stability on one dimension of a scale.
- m. Number of households moving from a condition of crisis to a condition of vulnerability on one dimension of a scale.



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**COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK  
GRANT PROGRAM**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Community Services  
Division of State Assistance  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20447  
<http://www.acf.gov/programs/ocs/csbg>

**Information Memorandum**

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**Transmittal No. 49**

**Date: February 21, 2001**

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**TO:** State Community Services Block Grant Directors  
Community Action Agencies Directors  
CAA State Association Directors

**SUBJECT:** Program Challenges, Responsibilities and Strategies—FY 2001-2003

**PURPOSE:** This memorandum describes how the Office of Community Services (OCS) will carry out its compliance and technical assistance responsibilities for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program during the next two years to help assure that the Community Services Network remains strong, focused, effective, and accountable.

**Specifically, the memorandum addresses:**

- Challenges facing the Network;
- How States and eligible entities may use “Results Oriented Management and Accountability” (ROMA) to meet those challenges;
- Technical assistance available from OCS to States and eligible entities as they implement ROMA, as required by law.

OCS appreciates the help received from the Network in developing this document, including suggestions and comments on an initial draft circulated late last year. We especially appreciate the guidance from the Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF) and its committees, State CSBG offices, State Associations and a number of CAAs and interested individuals.

**Challenges Facing the Network**

Last year, we celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary of the community action program. Over that remarkable time, we have learned many lessons, confronted many issues, and above all, helped many people achieve better lives in better communities.

The cornerstone of the Network's longevity and accomplishments has been its willingness to understand and adapt to changing client needs, community conditions, financial support and public expectations while maintaining a steady focus on eliminating poverty.

The most successful State and local agencies among us have come to understand that community action not only survives, but thrives, when it engages in continuous self-examination. Our “star players” ask and answer, again and again:

***“Why are we here, who are we helping, what are we helping them to become, and how will we know and describe success, both theirs and ours?”***

All agencies and their staff that comprise our Network need to ponder anew these questions from time to time. They are the wellspring of continued vitality. And, if we choose to ignore them, we place ourselves at risk. For these are the questions that will be asked of us by the general public, our clients, and especially our benefactors. They will demand our focus; they are entitled to answers.

The new Administration has given clear indication that it will emphasize results-based, client-focused accountability among Federally-funded domestic assistance programs. Recently announced Administration education and social service initiatives share common themes – that Federal funds should not lock clients into service systems that continually fail to meet their needs, and that alternative service strategies ought to be available and supported.

The Community Services Network is fortunate to have initiated its own performance-based, “Results Oriented Management and Accountability” (ROMA) system almost six years ago. As an effort in progress, ROMA has built strong foundations for continuous program improvement and accountability among State agencies, community action associations, and local entities. A significant number of States and eligible entities have implemented ROMA, but many have been slow to understand or adopt its results-oriented and accountability concepts.

**The challenges facing the Network over the coming years are:**

1. To safeguard support for community action by insuring that all agencies are strong, financially, administratively and programmatically, and that they achieve robust and measurable improvements in the lives of clients and communities;
2. To reinforce the role of community action as an effective and accountable partner to other service providers, including faith-based organizations, and as a viable alternative to failing service delivery systems; and

3. Toward these ends, to have all States and local community action agencies understand, embrace, and use ROMA as a omnibus for mission renewal, improved service strategies, strong program and fiscal management, and ultimate accountability based on client and community change.

It is in the context of meeting these challenges that OCS will work to help the Network move toward universal ROMA implementation over the next two years.

### **ROMA Implementation**

As indicated, the Community Services Network has been engaged in a voluntary effort over the past six years to create a new and powerful tool to help keep our programs strong and effective, “Results Oriented Management and Accountability,” or ROMA. A CSBG Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF), composed of Federal, State and local Network representatives:

- Identified six national goals for community action that both respect the diversity of the Network and provide clear expectations of results from our efforts:
  - Goal 1: Low-income people become more self-sufficient.
  - Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.
  - Goal 3: Low-income people own a stake in their community.
  - Goal 4: Partnerships among supporters and providers of service to low-income people are achieved.
  - Goal 5: Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.
  - Goal 6: Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.
- Developed and disseminated a number of performance measurement tools, including: 1) scales of client/family, community, and organizational well-being against which change can be planned, tracked and reported; 2) individual outcome measures for each of the six national goals; and 3) a *ROMA Guide* that provides step-by-step help in converting to results-oriented management;
- Established a web site devoted specifically to advancing ROMA implementation, including the sharing of documents, experiences, plans and Problems associated with innovation and change among Network constituencies; and

- Helped identify training and technical assistance priorities for OCS support to advance ROMA awareness, experimentation, and competencies.

As a result of these efforts, ROMA implementation has been steady, although uneven, across the Network. Many initial hopes for ROMA are being realized gradually:

1. ROMA has been used by some States and eligible entities as a framework for rethinking and redefining their overall mission, realigning their services, empowering staff, and evaluating effectiveness;
2. ROMA has expanded and enriched cooperation among CSBG agencies in a number of States. It has improved communication and coordination among State CSBG officials, CAA association executives, and local CAA directors.
3. ROMA has provided State agencies that have chosen to explore its possibilities with a vital new role in CSBG leadership and stewardship. It has provided a focus for meaningful State agency outreach to other State officials and legislators, training and technical assistance to local agencies. ROMA has helped create a common way to understand what community action does and how best to do it;
4. ROMA has provided some local entities with a means of not only “telling their story better,” but of “telling a better story.” Some CAAs have used results oriented management to target and coordinate their services, document and publicize the resulting success of clients in their efforts to become self-sufficient. These agencies have used ROMA-generated data to gain additional support, both politically and financially, from State legislatures and town councils.
5. ROMA has prompted some States and local agencies to develop new ways of tracking, recording and reporting what they do. A number of States are working on information systems that will permit collection, storage, retrieval and analysis of client-focused service and outcome information across funding sources, and for all eligible entities. Similar client-based information systems have been developed by individual community action agencies;
6. Some CAAs have used ROMA performance management principles to build new alliances and contractual relationships with other agencies that share responsibility for client or community outcomes.
7. A number of CAAs have used ROMA as a tool to build greater staff cohesion, commitment, and effectiveness. These agencies have helped all staff, regardless of whether or not they work directly with clients, understand their connection and contribution to agency goals, client/community/organizational outcomes.

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All of these changes being brought about by ROMA are encouraging. They are evidence that ROMA is far more than a measurement and reporting strategy, or a management gimmick, or a burdensome requirement that will go away someday and hopefully not be replaced by some other “fad” of the moment.

We must work together over the next two years to achieve universal acceptance and adoption of ROMA within the Community Services Network. We must do so not only because it is required by law, but because the continuation of community action as we know it may depend on our willingness to embrace change, to adopt ideas and concepts that we have fashioned ourselves to enhance program effectiveness and accountability.

OCS has identified a number of core activities that appear to be common among CSBG agencies that have succeeded in developing and adopting performance-based management in recent years. OCS will use these core activities as yardsticks to measure ROMA progress among States and eligible entities, and as focal points of State plan approval, compliance monitoring and program reporting. OCS training and technical assistance support will be targeted on helping the States and eligible entities conduct these activities that constitute basic ROMA implementation.

We encourage States and eligible entities to join with OCS in using these core ROMA activities to assess their own ROMA progress and to identify what work needs to be done to complete their efforts before CSBG reauthorization in Fiscal Year 2003. We will offer help to States to conduct such assessments. OCS hopes that the Network will agree that we need this uniform and easily understood way to document ROMA adoption. Our ultimate goal is to replace process measures with strong and specific reports of gains made by clients and communities with the help of effective community action agencies.

**OCS believes that the core activities constituting ROMA implementation are:**

State Agencies

1. The agency has developed, in coordination with eligible entities and the State CAA association, a State-wide vision statement that speaks to the goals and purposes of community action within the State and that supports the six national ROMA goals. The agency is encouraged to participate in, and contribute to, broader State anti-poverty/community development initiatives with outcome measures and goals compatible with ROMA;
2. The agency has trained all its eligible entities (staff and boards) in outcome-based management, and that 80% of the entities use ROMA concepts to guide needs assessment, agency mission review, activity planning, resource allocations, service delivery, measuring and reporting results;

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3. Eighty percent of the plans and program reports received from eligible entities in the State describe plans to achieve projected outcomes, and evaluate results based on measurable improvements of condition(s) among clients and/or communities served; and
  4. The agency submits complete, accurate, and timely annual reports to OCS on the “measured performance of the State and the eligible entities in the State” as required by Section 678E of Public Law 105-285, the Community Services Block Grant Reauthorization Act of 1998.

Eligible Entities

1. The entity and its board complete regular assessments of the entity’s overall mission, desired impact(s) and program structure, taking into account: 1) the needs of the community and its residents; 2) the relationship, or context, of the activities supported by the entity to other anti-poverty, community development services in the community; and 3) the extent to which the entity’s activities contribute to the accomplishment of one or more of the six ROMA national goals;
2. Based upon the periodic assessments described above, the entity and its board has identified yearly (or multi-annually) specific improvements, or results, it plans to help achieve in the lives of individuals, families, and/or the community as a whole;
3. The entity organizes and operates all its programs, services, and activities toward accomplishing these improvements, or outcomes, including linking with other agencies in the community when services beyond the scope of the entity are required. All staff are helped by the entity to understand the direct or indirect relationship of their efforts to achieving specific client or community outcomes; and
4. The entity provides reports to the State that describe client and community outcomes and that capture the contribution of all entity programs, services, and activities to the achievement of those outcomes.

OCS received a number of comments from the Network questioning whether ROMA should involve programs beyond the Community Services Block Grant. After careful examination of the CSBG authorizing legislation, which speaks to program coordination requirements both within and beyond eligible entities, consultation with the MATF, and review of ROMA implementation activities that have occurred to date, OCS has concluded that it is both necessary and appropriate to apply ROMA concepts to the work of community action, not CSBG alone.

OCS believes that the six national ROMA goals reflect a number of important concepts that transcend CSBG as a stand-alone program. The goals convey the unique strengths that the broader concept of community action brings to the Nation's anti-poverty efforts:

1. Focusing our efforts on client/community/organizational change, not particular programs or services. As such, the goals provide a basis for results-oriented, not process-based or program-specific plans, activities, and reports.
2. Understanding the interdependence of programs, clients and community. The goals recognize that client improvements aggregate to, and reinforce, community improvements, and that strong and well administered programs underpin both.
3. Recognizing that CSBG does not succeed as an individual program. The goals presume that community action is most successful when activities supported by a number of funding sources are organized around client and community outcomes, both within an agency and with other service providers.

### **OCS Technical Assistance and Administrative Support**

As discussed, the Office of Community Services views successful ROMA implementation across the entire Network as the best way to insure that our programs remain strong, focused, effective, and accountable for years to come. We intend to devote a significant portion of our CSBG technical assistance resources and administrative support activities toward helping States and eligible entities achieve this goal before program reauthorization in FY 2003.

OCS believes that the best way to achieve universal ROMA implementation by FY 2003 is to build upon existing capabilities within the Network. Our technical assistance strategy will rely heavily on using ROMA resources and competencies that have been developed over the past six years by various national organizations, State agencies, CAA associations, and eligible entities. We will support a mix of approaches, including "peer to peer," that have evolved within the network as proven catalysts for growth and change.

### **Among the technical assistance strategies OCS is adopting are:**

1. Promoting Core Competencies Across the Network

OCS believes that immediate needs among a significant number of eligible entities warrant support for two national training efforts: 1) strengthening community action program administration, with emphasis on fiscal management and accountability; and 2) creating immediate awareness, knowledge, and acceptance of ROMA concepts among entities that have not yet begun their implementation efforts.

Accordingly, OCS will support the creation of a national “academy” to provide basic and advanced training in program administration and fiscal management to a significant number of staff from eligible entities across the Network. In addition, we will support a number of community action leadership training initiatives that have proven successful in the past.

In terms of basic ROMA competency building, we will fund the replication of a “train the trainers” program developed in Pennsylvania in other States and regions. The Pennsylvania program helps community action staff gain a sufficient ROMA knowledge base and teaching expertise to spread the task of ROMA training within and among eligible entities.

## **2. State ROMA Planning and Tailored OCS Technical Assistance**

OCS received a number of comments to its November draft memorandum indicating that our initial plans to link or team States to achieve universal ROMA implementation failed to take into account differences among States in terms of their size, number of eligible entities, unique economic or political circumstances, experience with ROMA to date, etc. We appreciate the difficulties presented by our initial proposal and will respect the requests of many that we continue to support ROMA work by individual States or any State-generated consortia that might be created for special initiatives.

Given the short period of time available to complete ROMA implementation, OCS believes that it will be important for everyone in the Network to know what work has been accomplished and what remains to be done. Accordingly, OCS is asking State agencies and CAA associations to participate in the following ROMA assessment and planning activity over the next several months:

- OCS plans to convene five regional meetings with State agencies and CAA associations in July and August. A major portion of these sessions will be devoted to one-on-one meetings between State and OCS representatives to:
  1. Assess the status of ROMA implementation by the State and its eligible entities;
  2. Develop a State-specific work plan for completing tasks by FY 2003;
  3. Identify OCS technical assistance needs and strategies tailored to the particular needs of the State and its eligible entities.
- OCS is developing tools to assist States in conducting an assessment of eligible entity ROMA implementation progress in preparation for the regional meetings. A brief and easy-to-fill-out ROMA management survey conducted



in Pennsylvania and Florida is being modified to meet the needs of this OCS/State initiative and will be available for distribution to States shortly. In addition, OCS will support on-going technical-assistance during the period of information gathering, as well as help in processing and interpreting data received from eligible entities.

### **3. ROMA Best Practice Models**

Six years of pioneering work in performance-based management has provided the community services network with an abundance of “in house” model programs. While this knowledge base of successful ROMA implementers is known and utilized by some within the network, it needs to be organized and financially supported in a way that makes it available to a broader audience in the immediate future.

OCS is looking at a variety of strategies to identify existing and emerging performance-based management strategies at the State and local level that might serve as models for others. It will encourage and support electronic and other means of both disseminating model program information, and facilitating follow-up interaction, including site visits, as a result of the initial model program exposure.

### **4. Network “Consultants”**

OCS will identify a pool of network “consultants,” or peer-trainers composed of community action officials (from State agencies/associations and eligible entities) with knowledge and experience in specific aspects of ROMA implementation. A guide to these consultants will be developed and disseminated using a variety of communication tools. Supported by OCS, the consultants will be available to provide on-site, in-depth consultation to individual State and local agencies. They would also be available, on a more limited basis, to make presentations at meetings, conferences, or workshops.

### **5. State Plans**

OCS will use the annual and multi-year CSBG state plan submission process to strengthen its review of ROMA implementation plans and progress at both the State and local levels. One of the measurements we will use to assess compliance with ROMA provisions of the CSBG statute will be the extent to which the State is conducting the four core activities described in this memorandum and the extent to which the State is engaged with its eligible entities in helping them conduct their ROMA core activities.

**6. OCS Monitoring of States**

OCS will structure both the schedule and content of its periodic reviews of State CSBG programs to support this ROMA implementation initiative. Special attention will be paid to State capabilities to identify and meet the on-going technical assistance needs among eligible entities, particularly those related to strengthening overall program administration, fiscal management, and the adoption of ROMA outcome-based strategies.

**7. Focused Training and Technical Assistance**

As indicated, OCS will use a variety of ways to focus its training and technical assistance resources on completing ROMA implementation by FY 2003. We intend to set aside funds for State-specific needs identified at one-on-one State/OCS assessment and planning sessions at regional meetings this Summer. And, while some funds may be available for innovative proposals generated by States and eligible entities, OCS will use its competitive grant mechanism to address specific national needs, such program administration/financial management instruction and ROMA “train-the-trainers” replication.

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